they are empowered to levy." And they say,—

"For the prevention of disease and the saving of health and life, by early carrying out efficient works of drainage, and diminishing the mass of atmospheric impurities, by which the public health is depressed; and for the prevention of expenditure upon inefficient works, we feel it our duty to recommend an immediate exercise of the powers of the Crown; and

That the several commissions appointed under its authority, in the metropolis, be recalled with the least possible delay.

That the law of sewers, now administered by numerous persons in these separate districts, be confided to one body of commissioners for the whole of the metropolis.

That to ensure executive dispatch, and obviate that weakening of responsibility which arises from its present division amongst large bodies, the commissioners should be limited in number, and competent—through their known attention to sanitary improvement—to select and sustain the labours of paid officers and the execution of works, in the attainment of this their proper object."

"Concurrently with the immediate works of flushing and cleansing, which the paid officers may be enabled to carry out, we expect that the first work which a consolidated commission must see the necessity of directing to be proceeded with would be the general survey (of the metropolis) by the officers of the Royal Engineers, under the direction of the Board of Ordnance."

They further say:—"It has appeared to be our duty to state, that we have had presented to us ground of exception against one class of appointments to these commissions, namely, that of surveyors, of architects in practice, of builders, traders, agents, and professional persons connected with building operations in their respective districts;" and the report is signed,

"R. Grosvenor,
Edwin Chadwick,
T. Southwood Smith,
Richard Owen,
Richard Lambert Jones."

## FURNITURE AND DECORATION.*

Thanks to the exertions of a small number of labourers, the field of art has now become greatly extended; the world is again tending towards that state in which the love of the beautiful is recognised as an ingredient of happiness, and an important aid in civilization.

He who has no desire to surround himself with beautiful works, who chooses, for example, that cup which will merely contain liquid, or that chair which is only comfortable, has little idea that he is renouncing one of the gifts of nature, not less calculated for his enjoyment than any of the senses. With the natural love of beauty implanted, he chooses to *bury* this *talent* in the earth, to exist in the state of him to whom returns not

"Day, or the sweet approach of ev'n or morn
* * * * * * *
* * from the cheerful ways of men
Cut off, and for the book of knowledge fair,
Presented with a universal blank
Of Nature's works, to him expunged and razed,
And Wisdom at one entrance quite shut out."

But such is the state in which doubtless many are yet existing, in the old fallacy that beauty of form must be accompanied by a sacrifice of utility, or in a "haughty ignorance" of the attributes of art, and the pleasures to which they are capable of conducing. With these people, every consideration which the artist deems essential, is troublesome: that which answers the purpose is proclaimed good enough,—although *some* evidence of an attempt at design would shew that they are not as indifferent to elegance of effect as they represent themselves. It is not understood that every amount expended upon that which is not the best that *could* have been designed for the money, is ill-spent. Those who, with ourselves, would wish to see the houses of our friends furnished with such articles of utility as may, in all cases, shew that the artist has been at work, have with this section of the public to carry on the usual battle against ignorance and prejudice. Like other labourers in the educational movement, our prospect is improving, notwithstanding our efforts alike are amongst those who are blind to the pleasures which might reward them, and insensible to the dictates of self-interest. But *our* proselytes are not so much required from the poor and the generally ignorant, as from those who are of reputed education.

It is perhaps the habit of mankind to undervalue requirements belonging to the peculiar vocation of a few; so it is not to be wondered at that some who are not artists should think lightly of the intellect of one who can make the leg of a chair, or the edge of a drapery, matter of serious thought and attention. But, purpose, materials, and cost being considered, design will fail in that which should be its chief object and result, unless it contemplate the very highest excellence which human skill can attain: any thing which can aim at less than perfection according to the premises, is in fact bad art. Both in design peculiarly architectural, in those departments of the art which embrace the furnishing and embellishment of buildings, and in every branch of ornamental and industrial art, it is essential that the general public should be brought to respect the opinions of those who in number possibly are the minority, just as a similar deference is shewn for other opinions, springing from the peculiar vocation of any other body of professors.—Your hospitable friend, who "invites to dine," is not satisfied if he set before his guests juice of the grape which nine out of ten of them would pronounce excellent, but caters for your discriminating palate, that appreciates the excellence of a particular vintage. And, if he has thus a consideration for your enjoyment, it would at least be consistent to minister also to the gratification of your intellectual taste. But, if your friend, when dining in private, for wine of Oporto should substitute blacking of Day and Martin, you might not be able to question his right to take whatever he found digestible, but you would feel interested about him, say for once, there was "no accounting for taste," but resolutely protest against his inviting others to his banquets. So, in intellectual taste, we may not have the power to convince all, at once, of the extent to which they sacrifice the gifts of Nature, by denying themselves enjoyments arising from the cultivation of a love of beauty and of art, but their right to inflict pain upon those who are susceptible of these emotions, and to interfere with the acquirement of these pleasures by others who may now be ignorant of them, is a point which there might be sufficient reason for contending.

There are many reasons for believing that such a conviction is approaching, when the influence of beauty, to civilize and refine, to exert its intended function in the economy of the world, will be found, not only in the works to which art has been hitherto supposed restricted, but as it was once, in every object of household utility. For such a result schools of design were instituted, and to which many recent efforts have contributed.

It has often been said that people will hazard an opinion upon a painting, a statue, or a building, with confidence, which they would shrink from in any other question requiring the possession of peculiar attainments. But this is in a much greater degree the case in other branches of design, forming the subject of the works now before us, in which it is with some difficulty that the world recognizes the presence of art. Therefore it is of the utmost importance that correct views should be communicated by all those who attempt to direct these branches of art In the early stages of their renewed progress, lest, through well-intended but misconceived efforts, mistakes should arise which may prevent art becoming what is hoped for. It is true that correct principles of design, difficult of discovery as they are confessed to be in architecture, are still more difficult in the department of art called "ornamental and industrial." In architecture, for modern purposes the extent to which consistency of style, and observance of precedent should be carried, to the end that the result may gratify the mind, are points upon which it is far more easy to suggest queries than to find definite answers. But in articles of furniture, and in other branches of industrial art, the demand for novelty can scarcely be held otherwise than paramount, even when rules and principles may be clear, and possibly conflicting with it. In architecture, whilst the materials for the exercise of genius are of great extent in comparison with the opportunities of using them, and where combinations of forms previously known, and even familiar, can be made to assume all the beauty, and be worthy of all the praise of excellent works, when governed by the hand of genius,—in furniture, there is a public demand for something which is far nearer to be assimilated to change of fashion in dress. However much an artist may desire to influence the taste of his country, or his time, to a certain extent he must follow it; and in this way we deem that he has no choice but to minister to the passion for novelty, wherever it may exist. In elevations of buildings, though invention is far too little regarded, it is right to estimate that quality as merely one of the objects of the architectural designer, and which can better be dispensed with than outline, proportion, fitness, character, and expression, although governing the arrangement of known forms. Thus the history of design in furniture, presents us with a multitude of changes, and to properly allocate some of these in their chronological order, is occasionally a task, in which the contemporaneous architectural style affords no suggestion.

Still, whether it becomes the artist to pay that deference to the wants of manufacturers which seems to be required, or whether the unceasing demand for novelty be allowable in a branch of art which has not the stability nor the dignity of that which belongs to buildings, it would be inconsistent to say that there may not be rules, by which the forms of articles of utility, or of decoration, may be governed. We believe, then, first, that whatever form will interfere with the actual purpose in an article of utility, will be unsatisfactory, as part of a work of art; and, also, that the purpose should be evident. The form of an article of furniture, or of any utensil, should be, both actually and obviously, that which is best fitted for the purpose it has to serve, and it may be said, that it is not till those requirements have been satisfied that art comes into consideration. As we happen to have said more than a year ago,—"The type in objects of useful and ornamental [conjoined], is less readily explained than in those of fine art, and may be considered to be rather an embodiment of the principle of utility. Consequently, the forms of those objects must always be such, as it is at once evident are best fitted for the main end. The forms of nature and the rules of art are rather the matters engrafted upon this principle, than *obvious* in the design. The useful end should be completely fulfilled, and without danger of misconception." "All mermaids which turn out to be taper-stands, flowers which are curtain-holders, and bunches of leaves which are jugs, candelabra, or hat-pegs, we take;* originate from entirely erroneous views." We know that cups have been dug up at Pompeii, and elsewhere, which take the form of grotesque heads; and we know that a theory, the reverse of ours, which would make a flower serve the purpose of a candle-stick, or disguise the actual use under some other form, is apparently sanctioned by the example of the ancients, and is much in vogue now. But, however beautiful the works which might be shown to us as models, and as arguments against us, they are beautiful only for what they represent, not for what they really are. The case presented to the designer for solution was this—to produce a cup, or whatever object might be intended, which would answer the usual purpose of a cup completely; and, secondly, to invest the form with those attributes of beauty, of which the object was susceptible. But, if one who wanted to drink were uncertain what utensil had the capacity he required, the design failed in one of the most important stipulations. The work might be beautiful as a design, but clearly, the solution of the case presented to the designer had not been approached. In this way, some of the designs for Felix Summerly's "Art-Manufactures" are

* 1. "Designs for Furniture and House Decoration, selected from the Works of the best German and French Ornamentalists. With an Introductory Essay on Ornamental Art. By W. B. Scott, of the Government School of Design, Newcastle." Illustrated by nearly 600 figures in lithography. Fullarton and Co., Edinburgh and London. Parts 1—6.

2. "The Practical Furnishing, Decorating, and Embellishing Assistant; consisting of Original Designs in the Grecian, Italian, Renaissance, Louis-Quatorze, Gothic, Tudor, and Elizabethan Styles of Cabinet and Upholstery Work, Stoves, Ironwork, Chimney-pieces, Glass, China, Clocks, Pianofortes, Silverwork, Chandeliers, Monuments, Epitaphs, Stained-lights, Marquetry, &c. &c. Interspersed with Designs executed for the Royal Palaces, and for some of the principal Mansions of the Nobility and Gentry and Club-houses." By Henry Whitaker. Fisher, Son and Co. Parts 1—11.

3. "The Practical Cabinetmaker and Upholsterer's Treasury of Designs: in the Grecian, Italian, Renaissance, Louis-Quatorze, Gothic, Tudor, and Elizabethan Styles, &c. &c." By Henry Whitaker. Fisher, Son and Co. Parts 4—12.

* Vide Vol. IV. p. 186.

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